

DC POWER BACKUP

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to barrier movement systems and particularly to battery backup arrangements for such systems.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Barrier movement systems, such as that disclosed in U.S. Patent
10 6,597,138, generally are connected to mains voltage such as the 110V 60 HZ AC supplied by the local power company and use the power received to move a barrier under the command of a user. Such barrier movement systems include a power supply which converts the mains AC into DC to power electronic control circuitry and, when a DC motor is used to move the barrier,
15 to power the DC motor. When mains power fails, such arrangements are unusable because they lack a source of stored power.

Known systems do exist which have a separate backup battery charging system which is connected to mains AC voltage and charge a battery when mains power is present. When mains AC power fails, the DC
20 from the battery is switched to the barrier movement operator and used power barrier movement and to power the control circuitry for the barrier movement operator.

Such known arrangements require two inputs for mains AC power and two separate arrangements for converting the mains AC voltage to DC. As a

result they are not integrated with the barrier movement operator they are large in size and relatively expensive. Further, they generally result in a significant time gap between failure of the mains power and the application of the backup supply which may result in an uncertain and unsafe movement of the barrier. The arrangement disclosed and claimed herein provides backup power for a barrier movement system utilizing, in part, the AC/DC conversion capability of the barrier movement system and which is connected to the power supply in a manner to provide rapid and efficient backup power.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a barrier movement operator and battery backup arrangement; and

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram of the battery backup arrangement.

DESCRIPTION

Fig. 1 shows a barrier movement operator 11 for controlling a motor 13 and thereby move a barrier (not shown). Barrier movement operators which control the position of a barrier are well known and not described in detail herein. The barrier movement operator 11 comprises a barrier movement controller 15 which responds to operational input signals and user generated input signals to control motor 13. A power supply 17 received mains voltage at 110 V AC 60 HZ at input terminals 19 and converts a portion of the received voltage to DC. The barrier movement controller 15 is connected to receive DC voltage from power supply 17 via a conduction path

21 and is connected to power supply 17 via a communication path 23 so that the power supply can be monitored and controlled as needed.

When mains voltage is present at input terminals 19 a DC voltage is applied by power supply 17 between a conductor 23 and a conductor 25. In
5 the present embodiment the voltage on conductor 23 is positive with respect to conductor 25 by approximately 28V. It will be apparent that other voltage levels and polarities will also provide operational systems. The DC voltage between conductors 23 and 25 may be filtered or it may be an unfiltered full wave rectified sine wave or some DC representation inbetween.

10 Conductor 23 is connected to the cathode of a diode 27 and to a first terminal of a PTC resistor 29. Advantageously, resistor 29 is a highly non-linear PTC device which is sometimes referred to as a self-setting fuse or a poly fuse. In the present embodiment the resistor 29 is intended to limit current from power supply 17 to conductor 31 to about 600ma. The anode of
15 diode 27 and a second terminal of resistor 29 are connected by a conductor 31 to one terminal of a two terminal plug 32. The other terminal of plug 32 is connected to conductor 25 from power supply 17.

Plug 32 consists of mating portions 32a and 32b. Portion 32a remains with the barrier movement operator 11 and is configured to receive plug 32b
20 from battery backup unit 39. Plug 32 connects conductor 31 to conductor 33 and also connects conductor 25 to conductor 35. Thus, when mains voltage is present at input 19 a DC voltage will be present between conductors 33 and 35 from power supply 17. Battery backup 39 includes a nominally 24 volt

battery 37 which is charged and maintained in a charged state by a battery charge and control circuit 41 and conductors 47 and 49. Conductor 47 is connected to the positive terminal of battery 37 via a cut out circuit 45 which, for purposes of the present description, can be considered to be a continuous conductor from conductor 47 to battery 37. The details of cut out circuit 45 and its functions are discussed later herein with regard to Fig. 2. Also included in battery backup 39 is a diode 43 providing unidirectional isolation between the positive terminal of battery 37 and conductor 33. Diode 43 permits current flow from battery 37 toward conductor 33 and oppose such flow in the reverse direction.

During normal operation, while mains voltage is present at input 19, a DC voltage is applied by resistor 29 to conductor 33 and is used to charge battery 37. Battery charge and control arrangement 41 regulates the amount of current drawn from power supply 17 for this purpose. Should too much current be drawn by battery backup 39 (or by low resistance between conductors 25 and 31) PTC resistor begins to heat, causing its resistance to rise to limit the outflow of current. In an embodiment, resistor 29 may limit outgoing current to 600ma or less due to it's highly non-linear nature. If the mains voltage at input 19 fails, the DC voltage from power supply 17 will drop and the voltage between conductors will approach the 24 volts of battery 37. When this happens, battery 37 will act to keep 24V on conductor 33 via positively biased diode 43 and also on conductor 23 via positively biased diode

27. Thus, battery 37 will keep significant D.C. voltage in power supply 17 when it is used to power the barrier movement operator.

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram of the battery charger and control 39 and includes the cut out circuit 45 and bypass diode 43. The battery 37, which is the present embodiment is a rechargeable 24V battery, is connected with its positive terminal to conductor 46 and its negative terminal to conductor 49. Control is exercised over battery charger and control 41 by a programmed microprocessor which may, for example, be a microchip PIC16F72 running at 4M HZ. Details of the oscillator circuit 53 to achieve this rate of operation are well known. Microprocessor 51 receives sensed voltage and current levels within the battery charger and control 41 and based on the sensed readings, performs functions to maintain proper operation.

Regulated power to control the operation of battery charger 41 is provided by a power supply circuit 57 in response to input power from conductor 33 and conductor 47 via diodes 59 and 61 respectively. The dual connection of input power to the power supply 57 permits selective powering of the battery charger and control 41. The voltage on conductor 47 which may be from the battery charging circuit 63 or from the battery 37 or both is sensed by a voltage divider network 65 and applied to microprocessor 51 via a conductor 66. The voltage input on conductor 33 is similarly sensed by a voltage divider 67 and applied to microprocessor 51 via a conductor 68. The charge current being provided to battery 37 is sensed from the voltage developed by a resistor 70 which voltage is applied to microprocessor 51 via

an op-amp 72 and a conductor 73. Similarly the current being drawn from battery 37 is detected as a voltage across a resistor 77 which voltage is applied to microprocessor 51 via an op-amp 75 and conductor 76.

Microprocessor 51 receives the signals representing various sensed
5 parameters at analog inputs and controls operation in accordance with programming.

Battery charger 63 includes a series connected power FET 79 the conduction state of which is controlled by microprocessor 51 via a conductor 80 and driver transistor 81. The FET 79 is controlled in the pulse width
10 modulation (PWM) mode. Control pulses are sent from microprocessor at a predetermined rate e.g., 1KHZ and the width of the control pulses is increased or decreased depending on the charging needs of battery 37. Cut out circuit 45 comprises a relay 83 which is controlled by microprocessor 51 to connect or disconnect battery 37 from the battery charging and control circuit 41. In
15 the described embodiment, relay 83 comprises two coils 84 and 85 which are selectively enabled by microprocessor 51 to connect or disconnect the battery. The relay 83 shown must be actively pulsed to switch from one state to the other so that, should power be lost the relay will remain in the last state it was commanded to be in. The battery 37 is connected by relay 83 in response to a
20 pulse on conductor 87 via transistor 88 and it is disconnected by a pulse on conductor 89 via a transistor 90. A user is advised as to the state of charging and control circuit 39 by three separately controlled LEDs 91, 92 and 93 which

display the colors red, green and yellow respectively and by an audible signaling device 95 which in the present example is a buzzer.

5 When plug 32b (Fig. 1) is plugged into plug 32a and power is being provided between conductor 33 and 35 from power supply 17, the charge and control circuit will enter, or remain in, the battery charge mode. In the battery charge mode, the battery voltage and battery charging current are sensed and a selected PWM signal is sent to FET 79 to properly charge the battery 37. While the battery is being charged the green LED 92 is flashed. When the sensed battery voltage achieves a predetermined level, microcontroller
10 reduces the PWM signal to a maintenance amount and green LED 92 is controlled to provide an apparently continuous on light. As is apparent, the relay 83 is in the closed state during battery charging and maintenance. Should the microprocessor 51 detect a faulty battery by excessive charging current or battery voltage above a predetermined threshold, the battery will be
15 removed from the circuit by controlling cut out 45 to open circuit. Advantageously, microprocessor may periodically reconnect battery 37 to identify whether a problem still exists. If so, the battery may be continuously removed by cut out relay 83. During the detected problem, the red LED 91 will be enabled and optionally the buzzer 95 will be enabled.

20 When the charging and control 39 is in the charging or maintenance state and mains power fails eliminating the ability of power supply 17 to produce DC power, current will begin to flow from battery 37 via diode 43 and conductor 33 back to the barrier movement operator 11. This transition is

automatic and done without the need for control by microprocessor 51. The yellow LED 93 is enabled when power is being taken from battery 37 as will be manifested by a lower voltage at conductor 33 than at conductor 47. Should mains power be restored to barrier movement operator 11 the voltage on conductor 33 will rise and microprocessor 51 will turn off yellow LED 93 and again enter the charge mode.

When mains power remains off and the barrier movement operator 11 is moving the barrier, the increase in battery current will be sensed and buzzer will be turned on to audibly advise the user that battery power is controlling present operation. Alternatively, the buzzer may be intermittently enabled during the entire time that the system is under battery power, but such is often determined to be a nuisance. While running on battery power the battery voltage is compared to a Voltage Dropping threshold and should battery voltage drop below it, the yellow LED 93 will be flashed and optionally the buzzer 95 will be enabled. Lastly, should battery voltage diminish to a Low Battery threshold, cut out 45 will be opened to protect the batteries from over discharge. The resumption of mains power will automatically restore the described arrangement to the charging state.

Several user protection mechanisms are built into the operation of the system. For example, should plug portions 32a and 32b be separated and conductors 31 and 25 be shorted, current will be limited to a small value by non-linear resistor 29. Also when unplugging occurs, no charging or discharging current will be detected by microprocessor 51. When this occurs,

relay 83 is opened so that no battery power is available between conductors 33 and 35 so that improper connection of conductors 33 and 35 will be harmless.